

## RACE

**Little, K. L.** *Negroes in Britain: A Study of Racial Relations in English Society*. London, 1947. Kegan Paul. Pp. 292. Price 25s.

EVERYONE interested in the development of the social sciences in Britain, and in problems of racial relations, may look forward with pleasure to reading this stimulating and important book. The author begins by discussing the different methods which have been adopted in surveys of urban communities in America and in this country; he goes on to give a detailed account of the lives of the coloured people who inhabit that part of Cardiff's dockland known as Tiger Bay. In the second half of his book he discusses the historical development of colour prejudice from the time when negroes were first brought to England in the sixteenth century to the present day. Although there have been studies of like problems carried out on Merseyside and in other places, this is the first which relates the life of a coloured community to the greater British society of which it is a part; it is also one of the first accounts of the application of the techniques of social anthropology to the study of our own society.

The book shows how the Cardiff coloured community is based on the seaman and his white housewife; the main racial elements are Negroid (West African and West Indian) and Arab. There have been coloured people in Cardiff for more than thirty years, isolated from the rest of the city by geography (Loudon Square is more than a mile from the centre of Cardiff) and by the strong colour prejudice of the citizens. There were racial riots in 1919 in which 2,000 whites took part, revolver shots were exchanged and extensive damage was done. They made a lasting impression on the minds of the older generation of coloured men. The economic depression resulted in bitter competition between white and coloured seamen for jobs. The Special Restriction (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order of 1925 was used by the police, quite illegally, to harass coloured

British subjects, and was a cause of much distress. These and other factors provide the common background of experience which characterizes a "community," and makes it susceptible of study as a whole.

Dr. Little presents a fascinating picture of the life of Tiger Bay. He has made use of data supplied by Cardiff City Council reports, shipping records, newspaper files, the records of the League of Coloured Peoples, etc. This forms a background to his field work, in which he was assisted by a small group of local investigators. He gives a detailed account of the life of the community. One of the most interesting problems is that of the different behaviour of the Negro and Arab groups. The Arabs tend to retain many of the social and religious observances of Islam, the Sheikh wearing Arab dress and acting as unofficial banker, handling hundreds of pounds belonging to his flock without written bond. The negroes, although they retain a pride in their native institutions, have a much greater desire to emulate English cultural traits. They are intensely "colour-conscious" and their interests are in forms of political activity, both African nationalism and socialism claiming their support. An analysis of the origin of the white "wives," only 22 per cent of whom come from Wales, and of whom only a part are said to be drawn from the ranks of professional prostitutes, would throw light on the whole question of colour prejudice.

This book illustrates the difficulty of an anthropologist working in our own society. Owing to the unavoidable limitations of his material, Dr. Little can only present the problems and cannot discuss them fully. It is evident that in order to draw any valid conclusions from a survey of this kind it would have to be based on a study of at least 10 per cent of the community, say 700 in this case, and conducted by a team of trained investigators. Such a task is clearly beyond the scope of any but a Government department. It is to be hoped that Government anthropologists may be employed in Britain, as well as in the Colonial Empire, on the many problems of this kind awaiting investigation. In passing it should be men-

tioned that the statistical tables on pages 76, 85, 86, 101, 127 and 209 contain minor arithmetical errors which might be corrected in a subsequent edition.

The historical survey contains a wealth of research on the way coloured people were treated in former years. Paradoxically enough, there seems to have been little actual racial prejudice before the emancipation of the slaves. "The negro, becoming a man and a brother, forthwith ceased to be a friend," said an anonymous commentator at the time. Dr. Johnson's famous toast "to the next rising of the slaves in the West Indies" is recalled. A slave, Ignatius Sancho, butler to the Montagu family, wrote poetry, music and plays. He was an idol of London society and when he died in 1780 a thousand persons subscribed to have his letters published. The story of the foundation of the Colony of Freetown is perhaps little known and reveals an attitude towards the question of white and coloured sex relations which it might be difficult to parallel to-day. When, in 1786, the Government decided to provide funds for destitute negroes to be sent to Africa, 400 of the unfortunates were collected on board ship, and as an afterthought some sixty white prostitutes from London, likewise undesirable, were included in the cargo.

Dr. Little traces an interesting correlation between the establishment of absolute Imperial rule in Africa and India and the development of racial prejudice in Britain. He suggests also that the relatively less prejudiced attitude in France, which was shown in a sample survey carried out in 1918, may be explained by the difference in methods of rule in the respective Empires. It is impossible, however, in a short space, to give more than an impression of the great interest of the quotations from all kinds of contemporary sources, and of the author's challenging ideas on the causes of racial prejudice. He may be said to have succeeded in his twofold aim of drawing the attention of anthropologists to the possibilities of applying their techniques to the study of our own society, and of establishing the urgent need for a scientific study of racial relations.

F. K. GIRLING.

## PUBLIC HEALTH

**Burn, J. L.** *Recent Advances in Public Health.* London, 1947. J. & A. Churchill. Pp. viii + 409. Price 25s.

THE last edition of *Recent Advances in Public Health* was dated 1929, and the need for an up-to-date reference book had long been felt by medical officers of health. The comparison of the contents of this completely new edition by the Medical Officer of Health of Salford with those of the edition of nearly twenty years ago reveals above all how much the practice of preventive medicine in local authorities has become "social." Dr. Burn's book is much more than a survey of progress during the last few years. Rather it may be described as an outline of the best elements of current practice of the health departments of major local authorities. It is, however, no mere exposition of administrative methods, for advances in knowledge are always related to the practice described. The range covered is immense, and no single subject dealt with is exclusively in the province of the medical officer of health's work. This shows very clearly that he no longer works in isolation from the rest of the profession, but in close co-operation with the practitioner, general or special, of medicine and with all kinds of social workers.

As is very proper in any book on health, more than half of the space is devoted to children and their mothers. This section is entitled "Public Health and the Individual," and it deals with health visiting, maternity services, child welfare services, health education, problems of handicapped children and problems arising out of the inefficiency of the family unit. The rest of the book is divided into two sections. The first, "Public Health and the Community," deals with epidemiology, with the particular relationships of poverty and health and with some specific health services. The second, "Public Health and the Environment," deals with atmospheric pollution, water, food, refuse disposal and other environmental matters.

The reviewer knows of no other book which covers all these subjects except the large